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# SELECTIONS FROM SAXE

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# SELECTIONS FROM SAXE

*Jno Godfrey Saxe*

# SELECTIONS FROM THE POEMS OF JOHN GODFREY SAXE

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## CONTENTS

EARLY RISING. . . . . 1
THE OLD CHAPEL-BELL . . . . 4
THE PROUD MISS MACBRIDE . . . 11
THE BRIEFLESS BARRISTER . . 25
MY FAMILIAR. . . . . 28
THE JOLLY MARINER . . . . 31
RHYME OF THE RAIL . . . . 36
THE MOURNER À LA MODE. . . 40
TO A BEAUTIFUL STRANGER . . . 43
"IF LOVE AND LIFE WERE ONE" . 45
POST PRANDIAL VERSES . . . . 46
TO A CLAM. . . . . 50
LOOKING OUT INTO THE NIGHT . . 51
THE DEAD LETTER . . . . 53
BEREAVEMENT . . . . . 55
THE SILVER WEDDING . . . 56

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# Selections from Saxe

## EARLY RISING

OD bless the man who first invented sleep!"
So Sancho Panza said, and so say I:
And bless him, also, that he did n't keep
His great discovery to himself; nor try
To make it — as the lucky fellow might —
A close monopoly by patent-right!

Yes; bless the man who first invented sleep
(I really can't avoid the iteration);
But blast the man, with curses loud and deep,
Whate'er the rascal's name, or age, or station,
Who first invented, and went round advising,
That artificial cut-off, — Early Rising!

"Rise with the lark, and with the lark to bed,"
Observes some solemn, sentimental owl;

Maxims like these are very cheaply said;
But, ere you make yourself a fool or fowl,
Pray just inquire about his rise and fall,
And whether larks have any beds at all!

The time for honest folks to be abed
Is in the morning, if I reason right;
And he who cannot keep his precious head
Upon his pillow till it 's fairly light,
And so enjoy his forty morning winks,
Is up to knavery; or else — he drinks!

Thomson, who sung about the "Seasons," said
It was a glorious thing to *rise* in season;
But then he said it — lying — in his bed,
At ten o'clock, A. M., — the very reason
He wrote so charmingly. The simple fact is,
His preaching was n't sanctioned by his practice.

'T is, doubtless, well to be sometimes awake, —
Awake to duty, and awake to truth, —
But when, alas! a nice review we take
Of our best deeds and days, we find, in sooth,

The hours that leave the slightest cause to weep
Are those we passed in childhood or asleep!

'T is beautiful to leave the world awhile
For the soft visions of the gentle night;
And free, at last, from mortal care or guile,
To live as only in the angels' sight,
In sleep's sweet realm so cosily shut in,
Where, at the worst, we only *dream* of sin!

So let us sleep, and give the Maker praise.
I like the lad who, when his father thought
To clip his morning nap by hackneyed phrase
Of vagrant worm by early songster caught,
Cried, "Served him right! — it 's not at all surprising;
The worm was punished, sir, for early rising!"

## THE OLD CHAPEL-BELL

### A BALLAD

ITHIN a churchyard's sacred ground,
Whose fading tablets tell
Where they who built the village church
In solemn silence dwell,
Half hidden in the earth, there lies
An ancient Chapel-Bell.

Broken, decayed, and covered o'er
With mouldering leaves and rust;
Its very name and date concealed
Beneath a cankering crust;
Forgotten, — like its early friends,
Who sleep in neighboring dust.

Yet it was once a trusty Bell,
Of most sonorous lung,
And many a joyous wedding-peal
And many a knell had rung,

Ere Time had cracked its brazen sides,
And broke its iron tongue.

And many a youthful heart had danced,
In merry Christmas-time,
To hear its pleasant roundelay,
Sung out in ringing rhyme;
And many a worldly thought been checked
To list its sabbath chime.

A youth — a bright and happy boy —
One sultry summer's day,
Aweary of his bat and ball,
Chanced hitherward to stray,
To read a little book he had,
And rest him from his play.

"A soft and shady spot is this!"
The rosy youngster cried,
And sat him down beneath a tree,
That ancient Bell beside;
(But, hidden in the tangled grass,
The Bell he ne'er espied.)

Anon, a mist fell on his book,
The letters seemed to stir,
And though, full oft, his flagging sight
The boy essayed to spur,
The mazy page was quickly lost
Beneath a cloudy blur.

And while he marveled much at this,
And wondered how it came,
He felt a languor creeping o'er
His young and weary frame,
And heard a voice, a gentle voice,
That plainly spoke his name.

That gentle voice that named his name
Entranced him like a spell,
Upon his ear so very near
And suddenly it fell,
Yet soft and musical, as 't were
The whisper of a bell.

"Since last I spoke," the voice began,
"Seems many a dreary year!

(Albeit, 't is only since thy birth
I 've lain neglected here !)
Pray list, while I rehearse a tale
Behooves thee much to hear.

" Once, from yon ivied tower, I watched
The villagers around,
And gave to all their joys and griefs
A sympathetic sound, —
But most are sleeping, now, within
This consecrated ground.

" I used to ring my merriest peal
To hail the blushing bride;
I sadly tolled for men cut down
In strength and manly pride;
And solemnly, — not mournfully, —
When little children died.

" But, chief, my duty was to bid
The villagers repair,
On each returning sabbath morn
Unto the House of Prayer,

And in his own appointed place
The Saviour's mercy share.

"Ah! well I mind me of a child,
A gleesome, happy maid,
Who came, with constant step, to church,
In comely garb arrayed,
And knelt her down full solemnly,
And penitently prayed.

"And oft, when church was done, I marked
That little maiden near
This pleasant spot, with book in hand,
As you are sitting here, —
She read the Story of the Cross,
And wept with grief sincere.

"Years rolled away, — and I beheld
The child to woman grown;
Her cheek was fairer, and her eye
With brighter lustre shone;
But childhood's truth and innocence
Were still the maiden's own.

"I never rang a merrier peal
Than when, a joyous bride,
She stood beneath the sacred porch,
A noble youth beside,
And plighted him her maiden troth,
In maiden love and pride.

"I never tolled a deeper knell,
Than when, in after years,
They laid her in the churchyard here,
Where this low mound appears, —
(The very grave, my boy, that you
Are watering now with tears !)

"*It is thy mother !* gentle boy,
That claims this tale of mine, —
Thou art a flower whose fatal birth
Destroyed the parent vine !
A precious flower art thou, my child, —
TWO LIVES WERE GIVEN FOR THINE !

"One was thy sainted mother's, when
She gave thee mortal birth ;

And one thy Saviour's, when in death
He shook the solid earth;
Go! boy, and live as may befit
Thy life's exceeding worth!"

The boy awoke, as from a dream,
And, thoughtful, looked around,
But nothing saw, save at his feet
His mother's lowly mound,
And by its side that ancient Bell,
Half hidden in the ground!

# THE PROUD MISS MACBRIDE

## A LEGEND OF GOTHAM

I

TERRIBLY proud was Miss Mac-
Bride,
The very personification of Pride,
As she minced along in Fashion's tide,
Adown Broadway, — on the proper side, —
When the golden sun was setting;
There was pride in the head she carried so high,
Pride in her lip, and pride in her eye,
And a world of pride in the very sigh
That her stately bosom was fretting;

II

A sigh that a pair of elegant feet,
Sandaled in satin, should kiss the street, —
The very same that the vulgar greet
In common leather not over "neat," —
For such is the common booting;
(And Christian tears may well be shed,

That even among our gentlemen bred,
The glorious day of Morocco is dead,
And Day and Martin are reigning instead,
On a much inferior footing!)

III

O, terribly proud was Miss MacBride,
Proud of her beauty, and proud of her pride,
And proud of fifty matters beside,
That would n't have borne dissection;
Proud of her wit, and proud of her walk,
Proud of her teeth, and proud of her talk,
Proud of "knowing cheese from chalk,"
On a very slight inspection!

IV

Proud abroad, and proud at home,
Proud wherever she chanced to come,
When she was glad, and when she was glum;
Proud as the head of a Saracen
Over the door of a tippling shop!—
Proud as a duchess, proud as a fop,
"Proud as a boy with a bran-new top,"
Proud beyond comparison!

. . . . . .

VI

What *Lowly* meant she did n't know,
For she always avoided "everything low,"
With care the most punctilious,
And queerer still, the audible sound
Of "super-silly" she never had found
In the adjective supercilious!

VII

The meaning of *Meek* she never knew,
But imagined the phrase had something to do
With "Moses," — a peddling German Jew,
Who, like all hawkers the country through,
Was a person of no position;
And it seemed to her exceedingly plain,
If the word was really known to pertain
To a vulgar German, it was n't germane
To a lady of high condition!

VIII

Even her graces, — not her grace,
For that was in the "vocative case," —
Chilled with the touch of her icy face,
Sat very stiffly upon her;

She never confessed a favor aloud,
Like one of the simple, common crowd,
But coldly smiled, and faintly bowed,
As who should say: "You do me proud,
And do yourself an honor!"

IX

And yet the pride of Miss MacBride,
Although it had fifty hobbies to ride,
Had really no foundation;
But, like the fabrics that gossips devise, —
Those single stories that often arise
And grow till they reach a four-story size,
Was merely a fancy creation!

. . . . . .

XI

That her wit should never have made her vain,
Was, like her face, sufficiently plain;
And as to her musical powers,
Although she sang until she was hoarse,
And issued notes with a Banker's force,
They were just such notes as we never indorse
For any acquaintance of ours!

XII

Her birth, indeed, was uncommonly high,
For Miss MacBride first opened her eye
Through a skylight dim, on the light of the sky;
But pride is a curious passion,
And in talking about her wealth and worth
She always forgot to mention her birth,
To people of rank and fashion!

XIII

Of all the notable things on earth,
The queerest one is pride of birth,
Among our "fierce Democracie"!
A bridge across a hundred years,
Without a prop to save it from sneers, —
Not even a couple of rotten Peers, —
A thing for laughter, fleers, and jeers,
Is American aristocracy!

XIV

English and Irish, French and Spanish,
German, Italian, Dutch, and Danish,
Crossing their veins until they vanish
In one conglomeration!

So subtle a tangle of Blood, indeed,
No modern Harvey will ever succeed
In finding the circulation!

XV

Depend upon it, my snobbish friend,
Your family thread you can't ascend,
Without good reason to apprehend
You may find it waxed at the farther end
By some plebeian vocation;
Or, worse than that, your boasted Line
May end in a loop of stronger twine,
That plagued some worthy relation!

XVI

But Miss MacBride had something beside
Her lofty birth to nourish her pride;
For rich was the old paternal MacBride,
According to public rumor;
And he lived "Up Town," in a splendid square,
And kept his daughter on dainty fare,
And gave her gems that were rich and rare,
And the finest rings and things to wear,
And feathers enough to plume her!

XVII

An honest mechanic was John MacBride
As ever an honest calling plied,
  Or graced an honest ditty;
For John had worked, in his early day,
In "Pots and Pearls," the legends say,
And kept a shop with a rich array
Of things in the soap and candle way,
  In the lower part of the city.

XVIII

No *rara avis* was honest John
(That 's the Latin for "sable swan"),
  Though, in one of his fancy flashes,
A wicked wag, who meant to deride,
Called honest John "Old *Phœnix* MacBride,
  Because he rose from his ashes!"

XIX

Alack! for many ambitious beaux!
She hung their hopes upon her nose,
  (The figure is quite Horatian!) [1]

[1] "Omnia suspendens naso."

Until from habit the member grew
As queer a thing as ever you knew
Turn up to observation!

. . . . . .

XXII

(The Muse must let a secret out, —
There is n't the faintest shadow of doubt
That folks who oftenest sneer and flout
At "the dirty, low mechanicals,"
Are they whose sires, by pounding their knees,
Or coiling their legs, or trades like these,
Contrived to win their children ease
From poverty's galling manacles.)

. . . . . .

XXIV

A young attorney of winning grace
Was scarce allowed to "open his face,"
Ere Miss MacBride had closed his case
With true judicial celerity;
For the lawyer was poor, and "seedy" to boot,
And to say the lady discarded his *suit*
Is merely a double verity.

XXV

The last of those who came to court
Was a lively beau of the dapper sort,
"Without any visible means of support,"—
A crime by no means flagrant
In one who wears an elegant coat,
But the very point on which they vote
A ragged fellow "a vagrant."

XXVI

A courtly fellow was Dapper Jim,
Sleek and supple, and tall and trim,
And smooth of tongue as neat of limb;
And, maugre his meagre pocket,
You 'd say, from the glittering tales he told,
That Jim had slept in a cradle of gold,
With Fortunatus to rock it!

XXVII

Now Dapper Jim his courtship plied
(I wish the fact could be denied)
With an eye to the purse of the old MacBride,
And really "nothing shorter"!

For he said to himself, in his greedy lust,
"Whenever he dies, — as die he must, —
And yields to Heaven his vital trust,
He 's very sure to 'come down with his dust,' —
In behalf of his only daughter."

XXVIII

And the very magnificent Miss MacBride,
Half in love and half in pride,
Quite graciously relented;
And tossing her head, and turning her back,
No token of proper pride to lack,
To be a Bride without the "Mac,"
With much disdain, consented.

XXIX

Alas! that people who 've got their box
Of cash beneath the best of locks,
Secure from all financial shocks,
Should stock their fancy with fancy stocks,
And madly rush upon Wall Street rocks,
Without the least apology;
Alas! that people whose money affairs
Are sound beyond all need of repairs,

Should ever tempt the bulls and bears
Of Mammon's fierce Zoölogy!

XXX

Old John MacBride, one fatal day,
Became the unresisting prey
Of Fortune's undertakers;
And staking his all on a single die,
His foundered bark went high and dry
Among the brokers and breakers!

XXXI

At his trade again in the very shop
Where, years before, he let it drop,
He follows his ancient calling,—
Cheerily, too, in poverty's spite,
And sleeping quite as sound at night,
As when, at Fortune's giddy height,
He used to wake with a dizzy fright
From a dismal dream of falling.

XXXII

But alas for the haughty Miss MacBride!
'T was such a shock to her precious pride,

She could n't recover, although she tried
Her jaded spirits to rally;
'T was a dreadful change in human affairs
From a Place "Up Town" to a nook "Up Stairs,"
From an Avenue down to an Alley!

XXXIII

'T was little condolence she had, God wot,
From her "troops of friends," who had n't forgot
The airs she used to borrow;
They had civil phrases enough, but yet
'T was plain to see that their "deepest regret"
Was a different thing from Sorrow!

XXXIV

They owned it could n't have well been worse,
To go from a full to an empty purse;
To expect a reversion and get a "reverse"
Was truly a dismal feature;
But it was n't strange, — they whispered, — at all;
That the Summer of pride should have its Fall
Was quite according to Nature!

XXXV

And one of those chaps who make a pun —
As if it were quite legitimate fun
To be blazing away at every one
With a regular double-loaded gun —
Remarked that moral transgression
Always brings retributive stings
To candle-makers, as well as kings!
And making light of cereous things
Was a very wick-ed profession!

XXXVI

And vulgar people, the saucy churls,
Inquired about "the price of Pearls,"
And mocked at her situation;
"She was n't ruined, they ventured to hope;
Because she was poor, she need n't mope, —
Few people were better off for soap,
And that was a consolation!"

XXXVII

And to make her cup of woe run over,
Her elegant, ardent, plighted lover
Was the very first to forsake her;

He quite regretted the step, 't was true, —
The lady had pride enough for two,
But that alone would never do
To quiet the butcher and baker!

XXXVIII

And now the unhappy Miss MacBride,
The merest ghost of her early pride,
Bewails her lonely position;
Cramped in the very narrowest niche,
Above the poor, and below the rich,
Was ever a worse condition?

MORAL

Because you flourish in worldly affairs,
Don't be haughty, and put on airs,
With insolent pride of station!
Don't be proud, and turn up your nose
At poorer people in plainer clo'es,
But learn, for the sake of your soul's repose,
That wealth 's a bubble, that comes — and goes!
And that all Proud Flesh, wherever it grows,
Is subject to irritation!

## THE BRIEFLESS BARRISTER

### A BALLAD

AN Attorney was taking a turn,
In shabby habiliments drest;
His coat it was shockingly worn,
And the rust had invested his vest.

His breeches had suffered a breach,
His linen and worsted were worse;
He had scarce a whole crown in his hat,
And not half a crown in his purse.

And thus as he wandered along,
A cheerless and comfortless elf,
He sought for relief in a song,
Or complainingly talked to himself: —

"Unfortunate man that I am!
I 've never a client but grief:
The case is, I 've no case at all,
And in brief, I 've ne'er had a brief!

THE BRIEFLESS BARRISTER

"I 've waited and waited in vain,
Expecting an 'opening' to find,
Where an honest young lawyer might gain
Some reward for toil of his mind.

"'T is not that I 'm wanting in law,
Or lack an intelligent face,
That others have cases to plead,
While I have to plead for a case.

"O, how can a modest young man
E'er hope for the smallest progression, —
The profession 's already so full
Of lawyers so full of profession!"

While thus he was strolling around,
His eye accidentally fell
On a very deep hole in the ground,
And he sighed to himself, "It is well!"

To curb his emotions, he sat
On the curbstone the space of a minute,
Then cried, "Here 's an opening at last!"
And in less than a jiffy was in it!

Next morning twelve citizens came
('T was the coroner bade them attend),
To the end that it might be determined
How the man had determined his end!

"The man was a lawyer, I hear,"
Quoth the foreman who sat on the corse.
"A lawyer? Alas!" said another,
"Undoubtedly died of remorse!"

A third said, "He knew the deceased,
An attorney well versed in the laws,
And as to the cause of his death,
'T was no doubt for the want of a cause."

The jury decided at length,
After solemnly weighing the matter,
That the lawyer was drowned, because
He could not keep his head above water!

## MY FAMILIAR

"Ecce iterum Crispinus!"

I

AGAIN I hear that creaking step! —
He 's rapping at the door! —
Too well I know the boding sound
That ushers in a bore.
I do not tremble when I meet
The stoutest of my foes,
But Heaven defend me from the friend
Who comes — but never goes!

II

He drops into my easy-chair,
And asks about the news;
He peers into my manuscript,
And gives his candid views;
He tells me where he likes the line,
And where he 's forced to grieve;
He takes the strangest liberties, —
But never takes his leave!

III

He reads my daily paper through
Before I 've seen a word;
He scans the lyric (that I wrote)
And thinks it quite absurd;
He calmly smokes my last cigar,
And coolly asks for more;
He opens everything he sees —
Except the entry door!

IV

He talks about his fragile health,
And tells me of the pains
He suffers from a score of ills
Of which he ne'er complains;
And how he struggled once with death
To keep the fiend at bay;
On themes like those away he goes, —
But never goes away!

V

He tells me of the carping words
Some shallow critic wrote;
And every precious paragraph
Familiarly can quote;

He thinks the writer did me wrong;
He 'd like to run him through!
He says a thousand pleasant things, —
But never says, " Adieu! "

VI

Whene'er he comes, — that dreadful man, —
Disguise it as I may,
I know that, like an Autumn rain,
He 'll last throughout the day.
In vain I speak of urgent tasks;
In vain I scowl and pout;
A frown is no extinguisher, —
It does not put him out!

VII

I mean to take the knocker off,
Put crape upon the door,
Or hint to John that I am gone
To stay a month or more.
I do not tremble when I meet
The stoutest of my foes,
But Heaven defend me from the friend
Who never, never goes!

# THE JOLLY MARINER

## A BALLAD

IT was a jolly mariner
As ever hove a log;
He wore his trousers wide and free,
And always ate his prog,
And blessed his eyes, in sailor-wise,
And never shirked his grog.

Up spoke this jolly mariner,
Whilst walking up and down:—
"The briny sea has pickled me,
And done me very brown;
But here I goes, in these here clo'es,
A-cruising in the town!"

The first of all the curious things
That chanced his eye to meet,
As this undaunted mariner
Went sailing up the street,

Was, tripping with a little cane,
A dandy all complete!

He stopped, — that jolly mariner, —
And eyed the stranger well: —
"What that may be," he said, says he,
"Is more than I can tell;
But ne'er before, on sea or shore,
Was such a heavy swell!"

He met a lady in her hoops,
And thus she heard him hail: —
"Now blow me tight! but there 's a sight
To manage in a gale!
I never saw so small a craft
With such a spread o' sail!

"Observe the craft before and aft, —
She 'd make a pretty prize!"
And then in that improper way
He spoke about his eyes,
That mariners are wont to use
In anger or surprise.

He saw a plumber on a roof,
Who made a mighty din: —
"Shipmate, ahoy!" the rover cried,
"It makes a sailor grin
To see you copper-bottoming
Your upper decks with tin!"

He met a yellow-bearded man,
And asked about the way;
But not a word could he make out
Of what the chap would say,
Unless he meant to call him names,
By screaming, "Nix furstay!"

Up spoke this jolly mariner,
And to the man said he: —
"I have n't sailed these thirty years
Upon the stormy sea,
To bear the shame of such a name
As I have heard from thee!

"So take thou that!" — and laid him flat;
But soon the man arose,

And beat the jolly mariner
Across his jolly nose,
Till he was fain, from very pain,
To yield him to the blows.

'T was then this jolly mariner,
A wretched jolly tar,
Wished he was in a jolly-boat,
Upon the sea afar,
Or riding fast, before the blast,
Upon a single spar!

'T was then this jolly mariner
Returned unto his ship,
And told unto the wondering crew
The story of his trip,
With many oaths and curses, too,
Upon his wicked lip!

As hoping — so this mariner
In fearful words harangued —
His timbers might be shivered, and
His le'ward scuppers danged,

(A double curse, and vastly worse
  Than being shot or hanged!)

If ever he — and here again
  A dreadful oath he swore —
If ever he, except at sea,
  Spoke any stranger more,
Or like a son of — something — went
  A-cruising on the shore!

## RHYME OF THE RAIL

INGING through the forests,
Rattling over ridges,
Shooting under arches,
Rumbling over bridges,
Whizzing through the mountains,
Buzzing o'er the vale, —
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Riding on the Rail!

Men of different "stations"
In the eye of Fame
Here are very quickly
Coming to the same.
High and lowly people,
Birds of every feather,
On a common level
Traveling together!

Gentleman in shorts,
Looming very tall;

Gentleman at large,
  Talking very small;
Gentleman in tights,
  With a loose-ish mien;
Gentleman in gray,
  Looking rather green.

Gentleman quite old,
  Asking for the news;
Gentleman in black,
  In a fit of blues;
Gentleman in claret,
  Sober as a vicar;
Gentleman in Tweed,
  Dreadfully in liquor!

. . . . .

Ancient maiden lady
  Anxiously remarks,
That there must be peril
  'Mongst so many sparks!
Roguish-looking fellow,
  Turning to the stranger,

Says it 's his opinion
*She* is out of danger!

Woman with her baby,
Sitting *vis-à-vis;*
Baby keeps a squalling;
Woman looks at me;
Asks about the distance,
Says it 's tiresome talking,
Noises of the cars
Are so very shocking!

Market-woman careful
Of the precious casket,
Knowing eggs are eggs,
Tightly holds her basket;
Feeling that a smash,
If it came, would surely
Send her eggs to pot
Rather prematurely!

Singing through the forests,
Rattling over ridges,

Shooting under arches,
  Rumbling over bridges,
Whizzing through the mountains,
  Buzzing o'er the vale, —
Bless me! this is pleasant,
  Riding on the Rail!

## THE MOURNER A LA MODE

SAW her last night at a party
(The elegant party at Mead's),
And looking remarkably hearty
For a widow so young in her weeds;
Yet I know she was suffering sorrow
Too deep for the tongue too express, —
Or why had she chosen to borrow
So much from the language of dress?

Her shawl was as sable as night;
And her gloves were as dark as her shawl;
And her jewels — that flashed in the light —
Were black as a funeral pall;
Her robe had the hue of the rest,
(How nicely it fitted her shape!)
And the grief that was heaving her breast
Boiled over in billows of crape!

What tears of vicarious woe,
That else might have sullied her face,

Were kindly permitted to flow
  In ripples of ebony lace!
While even her fan, in its play,
  Had quite a lugubrious scope,
And seemed to be waving away
  The ghost of the angel of Hope!

Yet rich as the robes of a queen
  Was the sombre apparel she wore;
I 'm certain I never had seen
  Such a sumptuous sorrow before;
And I could n't help thinking the beauty,
  In mourning the loved and the lost,
Was doing her conjugal duty
  Altogether regardless of cost!

One surely would say a devotion
  Performed at so vast an expense
Betrayed an excess of emotion
  That really was something immense;
And yet, as I viewed, at my leisure,
  Those tokens of tender regard,
I thought: — It is scarce without measure —
  The sorrow that goes by the yard!

## THE MOURNER A LA MODE

Ah! grief is a curious passion;
And yours — I am sorely afraid
The very next phase of the fashion
Will find it beginning to fade;
Though dark are the shadows of grief,
The morning will follow the night,
Half-tints will betoken relief,
Till joy shall be symboled in white!

Ah well! it were idle to quarrel
With Fashion, or aught she may do;
And so I conclude with a moral
And metaphor — warranted new: —
When *measles* come handsomely out,
The patient is safest, they say;
And the *Sorrow* is mildest, no doubt,
That works in a similar way!

## TO A BEAUTIFUL STRANGER

GLANCE, a smile, — I see it yet!
A moment ere the train was starting;
How strange to tell! we scarcely met,
And yet I felt a pang at parting.

And you (alas! that all the while
'T is *I* alone who am confessing!),
What thought was lurking in your smile
Is quite beyond my simple guessing.

I only know those beaming rays
Awoke in me a strange emotion,
Which, basking in their warmer blaze,
Perhaps might kindle to devotion.

Ah! many a heart as stanch as this,
By smiling lips allured from Duty,
Has sunk in Passion's dark abyss, —
"Wrecked on the coral reefs of Beauty!"

And so, 't is well the train's swift flight
That bore away my charming stranger
Took her — God bless her! — out of sight,
And me, as quickly, out of danger!

## "IF LOVE AND LIFE WERE ONE"

UCH have I mused. if love and life were one,
How blest were love! how beautiful were life!
Which now, so oft, are alien, or at strife;
Though each, in bitter wise, makes secret moan
Of lamentation — knowing well its own;
Each needing each, yet evermore apart;
Here — saddest of the twain — the yearning heart,
And there the barren life. Ah! thus alone,
Existence, empty of its chief delight,
Creeps, dull and shallow, to the weary close;
And — like some plant shut up in rayless night —
Love pales and pines, that in the summer sun
Of life had flourished like the garden rose;
Would God that ever love and life were one!

## POST-PRANDIAL VERSES

RECITED AT THE FESTIVAL OF THE PSI UPSILON FRATERNITY, IN BOSTON, JULY 21, 1853

EAR Brothers, who sit at this bountiful board,
With excellent viands so lavishly stored
That, in newspaper phrase, 't would undoubtedly *groan*,
If groaning were but a convivial tone,
Which it is n't, — and therefore, by sympathy led,
The table, no doubt, is rejoicing instead.
Dear Brothers, I rise, — and it won't be surprising
If you find me, like bread, all the better for rising, —
I rise to express my exceeding delight
In our cordial reunion this glorious night!

Success to "PSI UPSILON!" — Beautiful name! —
To the eye and the ear it is pleasant the same;

Many thanks to old Cadmus who made us his debtors,
By inventing, one day, those capital letters
Which still, from the heart, we shall know how to speak
When we've fairly forgotten the rest of our Greek!
To be open and honest in all that you do;
To every high trust to be faithful and true;
In aught that concerns morality's scheme,
To be more ambitious to *be* than to *seem;*
To cultivate honor as higher in worth
Than favor of fortune, or genius, or birth;
By every endeavor to render your lives
As spotless and fair as your — possible wives;
To treat with respect all the innocent rules
That keep us at peace with society's fools;
But to face every *canon* that e'er was designed
To batter a town or beleaguer a mind,
Ere you yield to the Moloch that Fashion has reared
One jot of your freedom, or hair of your beard, —
All this, and much more, I might venture to teach,
Had I only a "call" — and a "license to preach;"
But since I have not, to my modesty true,
I 'll lay it all by, as a layman should do,

And drop a few lines, tipt with Momus's flies,
To angle for shiners — that lurk in your eyes!

May you ne'er get in love or in debt with a doubt
As to whether or no you will ever get out;
May you ne'er have a mistress who plays the coquette,
Or a neighbor who blows on a cracked clarionet;
May you learn the first use of a lock on your door,
And ne'er, like Adonis, be killed by a bore;
Shun canting and canters with resolute force,
(A "canter" is shocking, except in a horse);
At jovial parties mind what you are at,
Beware of your head and take care of your hat,
Lest you find that a favorite son of your mother
Has a brick in the one and an ache in the other;
May you never, I pray, to worry your life,
Have a weak-minded friend, or a strong-minded wife;
A tailor distrustful, or partner suspicious;
A dog that is rabid, or nag that is vicious;
Above all — the chief blessing the gods can impart —
May you keep a clear head and a generous heart;

Remember 't is blesséd to give and forgive;
Live chiefly to love, and love while you live;
And dying, when life's little journey is done,
May your last, fondest sigh, be *PSI* UPSILON!

## TO A CLAM

Dum tacent *clam*ant

NGLORIOUS friend! most confident I am
Thy life is one of very little ease;
Albeit men mock thee with their similes
And prate of being "happy as a clam!"
What though thy shell protects thy fragile head
From the sharp bailiffs of the briny sea?
Thy valves are, sure, no safety-valves to thee,
While rakes are free to desecrate thy bed,
And bear thee off, — as foemen take their spoil, —
Far from thy friends and family to roam;
Forced, like a Hessian, from thy native home,
To meet destruction in a foreign broil!
Though thou art tender, yet thy humble bard
Declares, O clam! thy case is shocking hard!

## LOOKING OUT INTO THE NIGHT

OOKING out into the night
I behold in space afar
Yonder beaming, blazing star;
And I marvel at the might
Of the Giver of the rays,
And I worship as I gaze,
Looking out into the night.

Looking out into the night,
I espy two lovers near,
And their happy words I hear,
While their solemn troth they plight;
And I bless the loving twain,
Half in pleasure, half in pain, —
Looking out into the night.

Looking out into the night,
Lo! a woman passing by,
Glancing round with anxious eye,
Tearful, fearful of the light;

And I think what might have been
But for treachery and sin, —
Looking out into the night.

Looking out into the night,
I behold a distant sail
Roughly beaten by the gale
Till it vanishes from sight;
And I ponder on the strife
Of our fleeting human life,
Looking out into the night.

Looking out into the night,
I bethink me of the rest
And the rapture of the blest
In the land where all is light;
Sitting on the heavenly shore,
Weeping never, — nevermore
Looking out into the night!

## THE DEAD LETTER

AND can it be? Ah, yes, I see,
'T is thirty years and better
Since Mary Morgan sent to me
This musty, musky letter.
A pretty hand (she could n't spell),
As any man must vote it;
And 't was, as I remember well,
A pretty hand that wrote it!

How calmly now I view it all,
As memory backward ranges, —
The talks, the walks, that I recall,
And then — the postal changes!
How well I loved her I can guess
(Since cash is Cupid's hostage), —
Just one-and-sixpence — nothing less —
This letter cost in postage!

The love that wrote at such a *rate*
(By Jove! it was a steep one!)

Five hundred notes (I calculate)
Was certainly a deep one;
And yet it died — of slow decline —
Perhaps suspicion chilled it;
I 've quite forgotten if 't was mine
Or Mary's flirting killed it.

At last the fatal message came:
"My letters, — please return them;
And yours — of course you wish the same —
I 'll send them back or burn them."
Two precious fools, I must allow,
Whichever was the greater:
I wonder if I 'm wiser now,
Sŏme seven lustres later?

And *this* alone remains! Ah, well!
These words of warm affection,
The faded ink, the pungent smell,
Are food for deep reflection.
They tell of how the heart contrives
To change with fancy's fashion,
And how a drop of musk survives
The strongest human passion!

## BEREAVEMENT

NAY, weep not, dearest, though the child
be dead;
He lives again in Heaven's unclouded
life,
With other angels that have early fled
From these dark scenes of sorrow, sin, and strife.
Nay, weep not, dearest, though thy yearning love
Would fondly keep for earth its fairest flowers,
And e'en deny to brighter realms above
The few that deck this dreary world of ours:
Though much it seems a wonder and a woe
That one so loved should be so early lost,
And hallowed tears may unforbidden flow
To mourn the blossom that we cherished most,
Yet all is well; God's good design I see,
That where our treasure is, our hearts may be.

## THE SILVER WEDDING

WEDDING of Silver! — and what
shall we do?"
I said in response to my excellent
spouse,
Who hinted, this morning, we ought to renew
According to custom, our conjugal vows.

"I would n't much mind it, now — if — and sup-
pose —
The bride were a blooming — Ah! well — on
my life,
I think — to be candid — (don't turn up your
nose!)
That every new wedding should bring a new
wife!"

"And what if it should?" was the laughing re-
ply;
"Do you think, my dear John, you could ever
obtain

Another so fond and so faithful as I,
Should you purchase a wig, and go courting again?"

"Ah! darling," I answered, "'t is just as you say;"
And clasping a waist rather shapely than small,
I kissed the dear girl in so ardent a way
You would n't have guessed we were married at all!

September 9, 1866.

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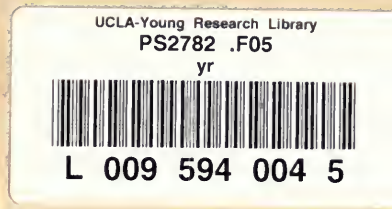

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